

March 4, 2010

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"This new roadmap shows the White House has heeded our calls in Louisiana for the federal government to recognize that our unique coastal wetlands are invaluable to our nation. No other ecosystem in the country offers such a distinctive environment - or is so threatened.

"I am pleased to see the Administration taking the necessary steps to finally coordinate the many federal programs aimed at sustaining the Gulf Coast, and giving them the urgent attention they deserve. We're working against a constantly ticking clock, and cooperation among all partners toward a shared goal is our best chance at success.

"For decades, Louisiana has struggled against bureaucratic roadblocks that have delayed much-needed coastal restoration and hurricane protection projects. This new roadmap addresses those problems and looks for new ways that will allow Louisiana to move forward with our Master Plan efficiently. We need to invest in what works, instead of pouring precious resources into what has failed. This is common sense, and an approach I have called for since I came to Congress.

"We also need to be smarter about how manage dredge materials, and this plan recognizes that goal. We spend millions of dollars each year to maintain our rivers and waterways, but often the sediment is not used to its full potential. Coordinating our dredging work with projects to rehabilitate our marshes and rebuild our barrier islands makes sense and saves taxpayer dollars.

"This roadmap will hopefully produce smart new policies that will advance Louisiana's coastal restoration efforts, making substantial progress in our fight against wetlands

loss and flooding. However, we must not lose sight of the importance of holding the Army Corps and other federal partners responsible for success. The best policies in the world won't rebuild marsh or barrier islands if these federal agencies can't work constructively with our state.

"Finally, we must recognize that the window of time we have to save our coast is becoming smaller every day. We must not let the perfect become the enemy of the good. This new roadmap calls for establishing and using the best new science and technology for protecting the coast. We always want to build smart projects, but these cutting edge practices have to be incorporated in an efficient way. We can't afford to replicate what has happened with the Morganza-to-the-Gulf project, where red tape has slowed progress almost to a halt. We must always step forward, never back."

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